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*Didelphis pygmaea*



*DIDELPHIS PYGMÆA.*

## THE PYGMY OPOSSUM.

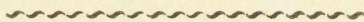


## CHARACTER GENERICUS.

*Folliculus* abdominalis mammarum.

## CHARACTER SPECIFICUS.

*Didelphis* hypochondriis prolixis volitans, cauda plano-pinnata lineari.



## GENERIC CHARACTER.

An abdominal *Pouch*, or *Follicle*, in which the mammæ are situated, and which serves as a temporary residence for the young.

## SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

Opossum with lateral flying membrane, and flatly-pinnated linear tail.



AMONGST the most curious quadrupeds yet discovered in the Antarctic regions, may be numbered the animal represented on the present plate; which (exclusive of its diminutive size, not exceeding that of a common domestic mouse) forms as it were a kind of connecting link between the genera of Didelphis and Sciurus, or Opossum and Squirrel. In the genus Sciurus we meet with a certain number of species which are furnished with an expansive skin on each side the body, by the assistance of which they are enabled to spring to a considerable distance, and to dart from tree to tree in a more rapid manner than the rest of their congeners. These particular kinds of Squirrels have been sometimes called *Petaurista* or *Petauri*; and in the description of a New Holland animal of this tribe, figured in the NATURALIST'S MISCELLANY, I have taken the liberty of instituting a distinct genus for such species under the name of PETAURUS; disassociating them, on account of the very striking particularity of the lateral membrane, from the rest of the Squirrel tribe. It follows, therefore, that on similar principles the small flying opossum here represented should form a distinct genus also, and be separated from the other opossums. In the present instance, however, I have not disassociated this species from the other Didelphides; and as it is probably by far the most diminutive of the tribe, have distinguished it by a title expressive of its smallness. The opening of the abdominal pouch in this species is of a semilunar form, as expressed in the outlined



lined figure in the corner of the plate. On laying open by incision this receptacle, I found on each side a young one in the situation represented in the sketch, and very large in proportion to the parent animal: they were totally destitute of hair, and consequently had not approached to the period of their second birth. I should observe, that in such specimens as were not in a pregnant state, the mammæ appeared extremely small, and were only four in number. The tongue in this animal is remarkably large and long, and of a flattened form. The hind feet (as in most other opossums) furnished with a round mutic or unarmed thumb or interior toe, and the two adjoining interior toes united (as in several other Australasian quadrupeds) under one common skin.